



Columbia professor speaks about America's failures in international affairs

JARED BRODSKY
Editor-in-Chief

According to Columbia University Professor Stuart Gottlieb, there is a disparity between the way America views its own power, and the way its power is perceived by the rest of the world. In a lecture hosted by CCM's Legacy Project, Professor Gottlieb spoke about the United States and its shifting opinion regarding international affairs. He started by reminding listeners that the United States was founded on an isolationist ideology, that the Constitution was written specifically to prevent our government from becoming too entangled in the political issues of foreign nations. It was 1796 when George Washington said, "Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course." And in 1799 Thomas Jefferson endorsed "free commerce with all nations, political connections with none." Despite the sentiments of its early leaders, according to Professor Gottlieb, "America has existed, most of the time, with an ideology

and disposition bent on transforming the world, punctuated by far briefer moments of acceptance that the world will not bend so easily to its preferences."

In addition to isolationism, Professor Gottlieb talked about two foreign policies that the US has explored: Mahanian imperialism, and Enlightenment progressivism. Mahanian imperialism, named after Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, a 19th century naval strategist, takes the view that a powerful navy in control of the world's seas is the key to global power. Mahan's views influenced the war between America and Spain in 1898. The superior navy of the United States proved decisive in securing the nation's victory, resulting in the Treaty of Paris, which gave the US ownership of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Phillipine Islands. However, as explained by Professor Gottlieb, there are problems with Mahanian imperialism.

"[Mahanian imperialism] requires a militarization and constant state of war and conflict that would never be accepted by the American

people," he said. "But its biggest flaw is believing that one state can actually win in world politics."

Professor Gottlieb said that in reality, one state could not win in world politics, because in an anarchical system "others will naturally balance against you." He pointed to Hitler and Napoleon as examples of this flawed way of thinking.

Enlightenment progressivism, also called "reformed world order" by Professor Gottlieb, takes the traditional American liberal view that free trade and democracy, practiced globally, would bring the world together. In 1919 Woodrow Wilson proposed his League of Nations, and entered into World War I with the promise that it would "make the world safe for democracy." Professor Gottlieb said this view was flawed in that it "assumed you could treaty your way out of anarchy and balance of power," an achievement unattainable in a world where states were motivated by self-interest rather than community.

"These experiments with American global power and their ultimate failures were due to

America attaining a strong power position, and thinking it could escape from anarchy in one form or another," said Professor Gottlieb. "America has never been comfortable with anarchy."

Professor Gottlieb said that America also failed in these experiments because it sees itself as "simply a force for good in the world" and expects to be recognized as such. The US thinks its values are ideal and universal, Professor Gottlieb explained. He brought up Voltaire, who called America the "apotheosis of human history," and Thomas Paine, who wrote, "We have the power to begin the world over again."

"By trying to universalize everything, 'begin the world over again,' the US put itself in an untenable and unsustainable position of being the world's policeman, banker, and moralist," Professor Gottlieb said. He also pointed to Doctors Without Borders, who were attacked by jihadis while attempting to treat polio in Afghanistan. Professor Gottlieb said that the jihadis did not see the medicine as helpful,

but as a Western liberal ideal being forced upon their country.

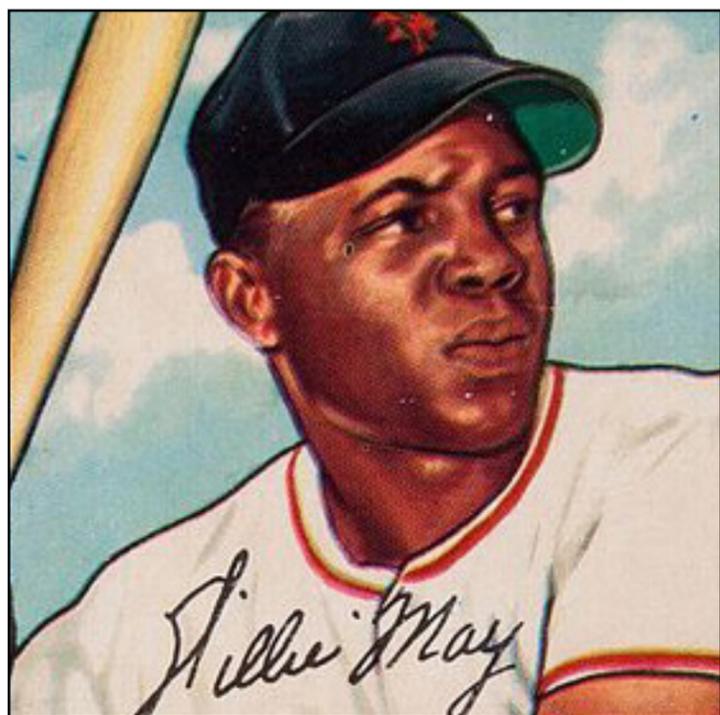
CCM Journalism Professor John Soltes agreed with the sentiment that the US thinks its values are ideal and universal.

"We can't simply go out with our ideals to the world and take it on a roadshow, and not learn from Canada's gun control measures or Europe or Africa's agricultural practices to save the environment," he said. "We don't seem to be learning from the world; we seem to have the answers ourselves."

Rather than tout its own ideals as superior, the United States needs to work together with foreign nations, according to Professor Gottlieb.

"The US cannot consistently be in a position where 'it's either the end of history, or I'm taking my ball and going home,'" he said. "The US has to find some kind of a middle ground to understand anarchy, the realities of rising powers, and the falsehood of wishful thinking, of this transformative power of Western liberal ideas for all of the world"

Willie Mays at 90: Baseball's greatest living player



Willie Mays as he appeared on a 1952 Bowman baseball card.

PROFESSOR KENNETH SHOULER
Adviser

Willie Mays turned ninety on May 6. Out of public view, Mays' legacy should nonetheless be celebrated. From here to Mars. A full-blown talent, he remains baseball's greatest living player. What does his greatness owe to? In large measure, Mays embodied a virtue now rarely mentioned: constancy. Returning from a two-year hitch in the Army at Fort Eustis in Newport News, Virginia, Mays resumed play with the New York Giants in 1954 and averaged just under 40 home runs for the next 13 seasons.

A dark time for our country mirrors a dark time for baseball. In recent times baseball lost Hank Aaron, Lou Brock, Whitey Ford, Bob Gibson, Al Kaline, Joe Mor-

gan, Phil Niekro, Tom Seaver and Don Sutton. Yet Mays survives, a connection to city ball in the 1950s, and as a model of how the game should be played.

Mays belted 660 home runs, a feat that stands taller now, in light of the hitters who cheated to increase their totals. After 23 years Mays retired in '73. Since then Barry Bonds and Alex Rodriguez used performance enhancers to "pass" Mays' total. Mays also hit a record 22 home runs in extra innings. How many of those would be erased if he played under baseball's inscrutable new policy, akin to some Men's Over 40 Softball Rule, that starts all extra innings with a man on second and none out?

After the Army, Mays missed just 38 of 2002 games over those 13 seasons. No misprint. That's 1,964 played, 38 missed. By con-

trast, Mike Trout, the consensus choice as today's greatest player, has missed nearly three times as many, 103, during the last four years alone. Mays didn't sit out games because he was playing for his supper. He competed before notions of workload management consigned athletes to the bench for fear of overuse injuries due to fatigue. He was a fixture; as omnipresent as the green grass where he patrolled centerfield in the Polo Grounds and Candlestick Park. He proved himself annually, receiving one-year contracts and not reaching six figures until 1966, when, at age 35, he earned \$105,000.

Aside from his irrepressible persistence, and childlike exuberance, Mays was a new kind of slugger. The term "five-tool

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The truth according to social media

PROFESSOR KENNETH SHOULER
Adviser

"When All think Alike, No One Thinks Very Much"
— Walter Lippman, American writer (1889-1974)

Of all the quotes I have ever read, Walter Lippman's wise sentiment tops my list. It's the truest, the most perceptive, the most disdainful indictment of mass conformity. Another statement, perhaps equally as strong, is similar in spirit. It instructs us about the standards of truth we should hold to before adopting an opinion. It comes from William Kingdon Clifford (1845-1879), a British scientist and philosopher from the mid-nineteenth century, who wrote, "It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence."

The thoughts of Lippman and W.K. Clifford arise from different vantage points. Lippman was an international reporter who claimed two Pulitzer prizes, one for his syndicated news column and another for an interview with Nikita Krushchev. Clifford, though he died of tuberculosis at just 33, attained philosophic immortality for his tough, suffer-no-fools essay "The Ethics of Belief." In it he argued cogently that no one was entitled to embrace a conclusion that he hadn't earned the right to hold on the basis of sufficient evidence. From two different walks of life, these estimable men called out mindless conformity and a refusal to engage in critical thinking. Were they alive today they would shine an unrelenting light on the ineffable and unprecedented stupidity our republic has endured in the last year alone.

The two most prevalent forms of stupidity, aided and abetted by social media,



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMAZON

"When All think Alike, No One Thinks Very Much" - Walter Lippman, American writer (1889-1974)

are the "Big Lie," which alleges, without evidence, that the 2020 election was stolen, and the persistent misinformation about Covid-19. Each is underpinned by deceit and lying. The stream of misinformation flowed steadily, but not only, through social media. At its worst, social media is the Wild West, allowing for a ceaseless and ungoverned repetition of false claims. Pandering to gullible audiences by the repetition of falsehoods is the strategy of propaganda reports parading as news organizations, such as Fox and OAN (laughably, the "One America News Network"). The trails of both lies lead straight to Donald Trump, and his cultish minions, who either embrace



WILLIAM KINGDON CLIFFORD
(1845-1879)

him outright or give nodding approval to his historic disdain for truth.

Trump launched his foray into untruth in 2011 with his "Birther Movement" conspiracy, tweeting or retweeting comments 67 times about where President Barack Obama was born. That gem, covered endlessly by news media, brought Trump to prominence. His claims, unsubstantiated like so much other foul nonsense that left his lips, appealed to closet racists everywhere. Henceforth he was their champion, their xenophobe in chief.

Anointed their fearless leader, Trump was best suited to take up cudgels against the browning of America, a browning that demographic estimates show will take full effect by 2045, when the non-Hispanic white population will fall to about 49.7 percent. When this "leader" stood on that podium on January 6th and shouted "If you don't use strength you are going to lose your country," he meant your white country. And the whitest of white warriors took his cue and descended on the capitol. Disputes about the meaning of "insurrection" and other forays into semantics can be trotted out by people affecting a knowledge of law. But what is irrefutable is that the chain of causation for that darkest of days had begun more than six months before. Starting on the campaign trail as early as July, he primed the pump, saying over and over again that if he lost it was because the election was "rigged."

He then lost by more than seven million votes and by an electoral college result of 306-232, the same margin he referred to as "a landslide" when he beat Hillary Clinton in 2016. Never mind. If he lost it must have been fraudulent, right? Hadn't he said so repeatedly?

His unchecked tweets, reinforced by rallies before the faithful, comprised a laboratory exercise in illogical thinking. The Washington Post, which began the considerable undertaking of recording his lies starting in January, 2017, counted 30,517 lies or misleading claims over four years. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/01/donald-trump-thirty-thousand-lies/>

He employed the same photo-op at every MAGA rally. With Trump facing the camera, we observed a sea of pale faces, red hats, rippling flags, and homemade signs just over his shoulder. He stood in the same blue suit, white shirt, and red tie. It might as well have been a one-piece; as predictable as a ballplayer's home uniform. Thus, despite the steady stream of inanities issuing from his lips, Trump had appropriated American symbols, essentially identifying America with his narrow vision of what it ought to be. Vision? This is the same dunce who read from a piece of paper and pronounced Yosemite National Park as "Yo-Semite." He also didn't know that England possessed nuclear weapons.

Add to his ignorance about the world in general his myriad logical fallacies, plentiful enough to make anyone rethink their manner of teaching logic. Never has so little substance and such persistent shallowness moved the masses. Examine a handful of fallacies and you won't be disappointed. He committed them. Given his paucity of knowledge and things asserted without evidence, ad ignorantiam or "appeal to ignorance"—where one draws a conclusion based on little or no evidence—is a constant standby. Such as Covid-19 will go away "like a miracle" or "when the warm weather comes" or by ingesting bleach.

His oratory was frequently peppered with a "Katy, the sky is falling" brand of urgency, which bespeaks ad baculum, or ap-

peal to fear—getting one's audience to accept a conclusion by a threat or force. How to threaten the masses? Tell them that the "Black Lives Matter" protests are coming to a suburb near them and that only he can stop it. Or repeat that the mandate to wear masks is a hoax and designed to limit their constitutional freedom. Other Trump favorites are "Ad hominem," or "To the Man," referring to the personal attacks that he unleashes on foes as a substitute for persuasive arguments. Then there's ad verecundiam or "unqualified authority," which Trump surely is on everything from statecraft to media to science. One of the many things that professors Patten, Shin, and Soltes showed, with their thorough and brilliant programs called the "Shakespeare Conversations," is that Trump is a striking analogue to Hotspur from Henry IV. To be sure, he is incurious, utterly, about the world he inhabits. He has no turn for poetry or philosophy, history or science, the arts or biography.

Nearly four months since the election of a competent and non-Tweeting leader in President Biden, signs abound that a good portion of the country has taken Trump's imprint as wax takes a seal. "The Big Lie," used throughout history and employed by Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels in World War II, is more effective now than ever, given the power of social media. Professor David Rand, of MIT's Sloan School of Management, has studied the misinformation campaign to study its effectiveness.

"What we found was disturbing; a majority really believed the lie," Rand said, "77 percent of Trump voters believed in widespread voter fraud." It was the continuous assertions that Trump actually won the popular vote that led to the belief among his supporters that this was actually the case. Said Rand, "Repeating it makes people believe it."

And still does. Rand's study occurred in January, four months ago. And where do we stand now? In a similar place. Republican leaders have made belief in the "Big Lie" the litmus test for the right to be elected and hound those of their own party, such as third-ranking Republican Liz Cheney and Mitt Romney who deign to reject that lie. In fact, despite 60 failed attempts to challenge the election with charges of voter fraud, 70 percent of Republicans at large still believe (four months after the MIT study) that the election was fraudulent, according to an article in Forbes. Other ad populum brainlessness follows suit, as night follows day. Some 45 percent of Republicans do not plan on being vaccinated, according to a New York Times article. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/14/us/politics/republicans-covid-vaccines.html>

Their rejection of the science results from the mixed messaging about Covid-19 that has been perpetrated for more than a year. A Cornell University study shows that Trump is the single largest driver of Covid-19 misinformation in the world. Researchers at Cornell University analyzed 38 million articles about the pandemic in English-speaking media around the world. Mentions of Trump made up nearly 38 percent of the overall "misinformation conversation," thus making the former president the largest driver of the "infodemic"—falsehoods involving the pandemic. It is the first comprehensive examination of coronavirus information in traditional and online media.

The study identified 11 topics of misinformation, including various conspiracy theories. By far the most prevalent topic of misinformation was "miracle cures," including Trump's promotion of anti-malarial drugs and disinfectants and ultraviolet light as potential treatments for Covid-19. A day after he floated that idea, more than 30,000 articles pertaining to miracle cures

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Mays hauls in Vic Wertz's drive near the wall in Game 1 of the 1954 World Series.

Mays

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player”—a wunderkind who hit for average and power, and could field, run and throw—could have been coined for him. Long ball hitters hadn't won stolen base titles before, but Mays won four straight from 1956-1959. Having learned his signature “basket catch” at Fort Eustis from fellow soldier and outfielder Al Fortunato, Mays led the league several times in put outs and assists. Dodger GM Fresco Thompson said, “Willie Mays’ glove is where triples go to die.” It was fitting that his idol was Joe DiMaggio, who Mays thought of as a complete player. During the summer celebration of baseball’s centennial in 1969, Mays wasn’t voted the game’s greatest living player. DiMaggio was. But according to a loose formula that many employ, Mays is the greatest “all-around” player of all time.

Some recall the Mays-Mickey Mantle era of the 1950s as the “Golden Age” of baseball. The Dodgers, Giants and Yankees would agree. In a 12-year stretch from ‘47 through ‘58 at least one New York team competed in 10 of the World Series. Two New York teams played in seven of them. The beloved teams also boasted the three best centerfielders, Duke Snider, Mays, and Mantle. Mantle addressed a banquet at which all three were present and said, “The best centerfielder played for the Giants.”

A lean 5-10 and 170 pounds, Mays was living proof that a man

of normal size with a sound if vicious swing could crush the ball. He clouted four homers in one game in Milwaukee’s County Stadium on April 30, 1961. The centerfielder for the Braves also hit two. It was Hank Aaron. But no stage revealed the broad range of Mays’ talents like the All-Star Game. “The All-Star Game was made for Willie Mays,” Ted Williams said. And Mays was usually the game’s most versatile attraction. In 1960 there two All-Star contests, one in Cleveland’s Municipal Stadium and the second two days later in Yankee

Stadium. In game one, he led off with a triple and followed with a double and single. In game two, he slugged a homer among three hits and stole a base. The National League won both.

No one currently playing reminds us of Mays. Ken Griffey, Jr. looked like he might become the next Mays. But his rise in the 1990s was mirrored by a decade-long decline beginning in 2000. We shouldn’t hold our breath waiting for another to rival Willie Mays.

Shouler was a panelist for baseball’s “All-Century Team.”

Social

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sprung up, compared to 10,000 only days earlier. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-misinformation.html>

Another study, conducted six months ago by Columbia University’s Earth Institute’s National Center for Disease Preparedness, showed that between 130,000 and 210,000 of the then 217,717 deaths in the United States could have been avoided if the Trump administration had quickly and effectively implemented a cohesive public health response to the coronavirus. Now the death toll stands at more than 577,000 people dead in the United States. Using the same proportion of preventable deaths estimated by the report, of those 577,000 deaths between 340,000 and 520,000 would have been preventable. These deaths are blood on his hands, nothing less.

<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2020/10/22/covid-19-response-avoidable-deaths/>

Meanwhile, Cyber Ninjas are being paid \$150,000 to conduct an “election review” and recount the vote in Arizona as we speak. The future doesn’t bode well in other ways. Assorted “Congressional Kardashians”—a name affixed to those who are bent more on self-promotion than they are on public service—such as Marjorie Taylor Green, Josh Howley, and Lauren Boebert, float Q-Anon conspiracies, want to take their guns into the Capitol chambers, and are proud to vote down bills against hate speech.

Facebook and Twitter were Trump’s primary means to his ill-advised end of delegitimizing the election. As of May 5, Facebook continued its ban on Trump. The decision is just, as no president in our history did anything resembling what he did on January 6. America lives under a democracy, not an autocracy. As such, the most important four words we hold to are “The people have spoken.”

THE YOUNGTOWN EDITION

The Student Newspaper of the County College of Morris

County College of Morris • SCC 129
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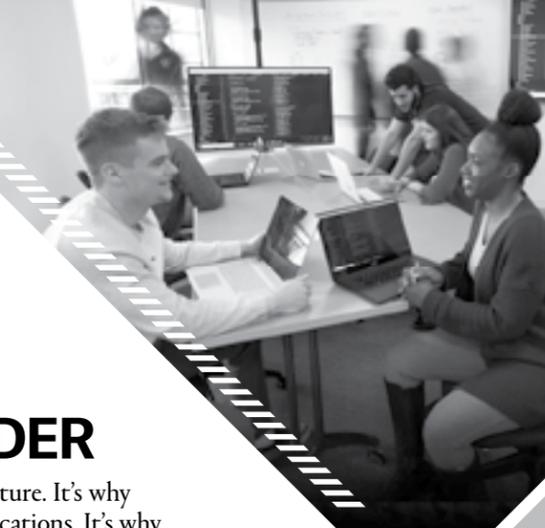
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